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STORY OF NEW ORLEANS JEWISH ORPHANS' HOME.

In the year of 1854 the Jewish population of New Orleans consisted approximately of 2000 souls.

The religious part of the communal life was concentrated in three Synagogues, viz.: Gates of Mercy, the Dispersed of Judah, and Gates of Prayer. The dispensing of charity was centered in the "Hebrew Benevolent Society," created in 1844, and the "Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Association," organized in 1847. The former attended to the wants and needs of the poor; it provided medical aid and medicine for the sick; it helped the poor immigrant, entirely without the means of earning a living; it took care of the fatherless and motherless, and relieved the distressed and the widow. In fact, it covered every branch of charity, in all its manifold ramifications, and in all these it received the support of the sister society.

The fatal epidemics of yellow fever of 1847, and more especially of 1853, had carried desolation in their train, and the result was the rapid increase of widows and orphans, and also of additional distress amongst the poor.

The burdens of the association grew incessantly, and the strain upon it became very great.

At this time there were no very rich people, in the sense conveyed by the wealth of the present day.

With the exception of a few old families, the greatest portion of the population of that time was the result of gradual emigration, and, too short a time had elapsed since their arrival for them to effect a great accumulation of worldly goods. In one brief sentence, the Jewish community had but moderate means and resources.

The leaders of thought, and the men who had to bear the brunt of the untoward and anomalous conditions, gave it the most serious attention.

Mr. Joseph Simon was, at that

time, the President of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, Rev. James K. Gutheim, its Vice President, and Mr. Joseph Magner, the Secretary.

It could easily be foreseen that the burdens and difficulties which were besetting the Society on all sides would, unless relieved in some manner, wreck it. And then the idea was brought forward for the creation of a separate body for the support and maintenance of the widow and the orphan. To this end, the above named executive officers of the Society issued a call for a mass meeting of the Israelites of the city, to convene on the 25th day of November, 1854, at the old Masonic Hall, on St. Charles street.

A goodly number attended on that day, and the meeting was organized by electing Mr. Gershom Kursheedt as Chairman, and Rev. James K. Gutheim as Secretary.

The President of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, Mr. Joseph Simon, stated the purpose of the call to be the establishment of an asylum for poor widows and orphans. The subject elicited a general discussion, in which many divergent opinions were expressed. No decision was arrived at, however, at this meeting, and a motion was carried to adjourn to meet again on the 3d day of September, so as to enable the community to consider the proposed measure in the meantime.

On the meeting reconvening on the third day of September, the wisdom of the adjournment became manifest, for unanimity became the prominent feature of its transactions. It instructed the

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